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STATE FOR NEA/I AND NEA/ELA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EFIN](#) [ECON](#) [JO](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI PARLIAMENTARIANS WARN OF IRANIAN INFLUENCE;
PREDICT DIRE RESULTS IN NEXT YEAR,S ELECTIONS

Classified By: DCM Lawrence Mandel for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Iraqi Parliamentarian Dr. Saleh al-Mutlaq repeated to Emboffs previous allegations of continuing extensive corruption in the Iraqi government and wide-spread influence by Iran. Mutlaq claimed that the Iraqi government, military, and media, are all under the influence of Iranian-supported parties. He added that the Iraqi High Electoral Commission (IHEC) was also controlled and corrupted thoroughly by Islamists who were easily able to perpetrate fraud, actions which he predicted would result in a major victory by the Islamists (and thus Iran) in the upcoming election. He commented that many Sunnis might boycott the upcoming election, as they did in 2005.

¶2. (C) Mutlaq also reported that Iran, in addition to its other efforts, is now funding both Sunni and Shi'a political parties in order to gain influence and splinter the opposition. Mutlaq complained that the government remained extremely corrupt and incompetent, commenting that upon the fall of the Saddam regime, many criminals were allowed into government ministries, with their only credentials being that they had been imprisoned under Saddam. He decried the excessive bureaucracy: with everyone afraid to make the smallest mistake, they refused to make the smallest decisions, and the simplest tasks required extreme amounts of paperwork and repeat visits to multiple ministries.

¶3. (C) Mutlaq then inquired about possible international observers being present at next year's election to help ensure fairness, commenting that with the exit of U.S. troops from Iraq, there would be nothing to stop pro-Iranian elements from exploiting the Shi'a-led Government of Iraq to take control. He also asked about U.S. financial assistance for political parties opposed to the allegedly Iranian-controlled Shi'a parties.

¶4. (C) Iraqi Member of Parliament Dr. Nada Ibrahim, a member of Mutlaq's party (and a licensed physician), supported his observations, saying that the Islamic parties from both Shi'a and Sunni sects were gaining more control over the Iraqi public through pressure, connections, and funds provided by Iran. Claiming the current "democracy" in Iraq was a "mockery," she said educated Iraqis society continued to depart the country, leaving the less educated and more modestly skilled to run the country. She said the government had no initiatives to solve any of the current social problems -- health care and education, for example -- and was depriving the next generation of Iraqis, many of whom are currently refugees or internally displaced, of future opportunities.

¶5. (C) When Emboff commented that Iraq was now their country and they, as Members of Parliament, were in a position to affect change, they countered that there was nothing they could do because PM Maliki and his government remained under Iran's heavy influence. They repeated that Iran continued to make significant inroads. Mutlaq added that the U.S. refusal

to support the anti-Islamists in Iraq, was in effect abandoning the country to the extremists and the Iranians.

¶7. (C) Comment: Mutlaq and his party are no fans of PM Maliki and these complaints are similar to ones we have heard several times before. Mutlaq is prone to political hyperbole but fortunately his earlier predictions of the "awakening movements" falling apart, and that wide-spread violence would shortly begin anew, did not come to pass. While Iran is actively supporting various Iraqi Shi'a parties in the run-up to Iraqi elections, the claim that Tehran is now also funding Sunni Islamist parties is a new allegation. Post will continue to meet with Sunni Iraqis in Jordan and report as new information or new allegations surface. End comment.

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